PINCH POINT VOL 2

JESSEMELANCHOLY

Between the four or five piece bands playing in crowded pubs, and the folk or jazz musicians performing solo sets in the afternoon, there exists another group of artists who float between these two worlds. Musicians who thrive within contemporary styles, creating an undeniable intimacy in their performances that reconnect listeners listeners to the present.

This is a world felt in the music and performances of JesseMelancholy. After releasing various singles in 2023, he dropped his debut album, *does the skin i wear define me?* — a release that solidified his name within Adelaide's music scene.

"I'd probably categorise my music as alternative pop" Jesse says. " A lot of people like to call it hyper-pop or anti-pop, but to me it's just pop music with an edge."

While this insecurity in genre feels unfamiliar in a world ruled by categories, the fluidity of Jesse's music is telling of the art he creates. It's a sound founded on introspection, where deeply personal experiences create space for connection, while his instrumentation forms the electronic pulse that differentiates his style from others.

With a musician for a father, Jesse's childhood was constantly surrounded by music. However, it wasn't until later into his youth that he truly found his love for sound.

"I feel like my mom's music taste is what really got me into music. I can remember listening to *21* by Adele for the first time and I was like, 'holy shit, this is crazy!"

And while becoming an avid listener, it wasn't until around 16 that Jesse began creating music himself. "The thought of writing had always been really scary," he admits. "I just always loved music and loved certain scenes of music, but I reached a point where I wanted to be in it, not just listening to it."

And as he began, Jesse was able to find a personal space within his songwriting. With songs so deeply personal, so too is his process.

"When it comes down to it, I much prefer to work in a very secluded environment. I like to be by myself, alone in my room, because that's definitely when I write the best and say what I'm really feeling in a way that feels most honest to me."

This process underscores the value that Jesse finds in his work, with each piece he releases being a careful curation of personal thought and experience. However, while so deeply connected to self, his songs are not insular. Jesse has always recognised that, while writing from personal experience, his listeners also find reflections of themselves within his lyrics.

"I want people to be able to relate to my music, but I also want it to be more 'Jesse', if that makes sense. I think that's what I'm moving towards—definitely more so taking from the past, which is unlike what I'm used to. I'm 21 now—I've lived 21 years of life. I want to try to encapsulate periods of my life or relationships or friendships in my songs so I can have those memories there forever."

And this songwriting process has also become influenced by his times on stage.

“Having now performed a few times, when I’m creating music, I definitely do produce through a filtered lens of being listened to live. I never used to think about that before, but performance has become a crucial part of writing for me.”

Initially, performance felt like an alien concept. Early into his songwriting, Jesse found minor exposure by posting songs to SoundCloud. And in this time, he never thought about performing, or really had the desire to.

“I held a lot of nervous energy towards the idea of it until I actually did it.”

That first moment was around two years ago in Melbourne, and it was a defining moment in his musical journey. Seeing a group of online friends who he’d never met in-person before, Jesse performed along six other artists.

“It was definitely a very nerve-wracking experience, but I’m so thankful to have that memory.”

And since then, he’s approach towards music has transformed with his love for the stage.

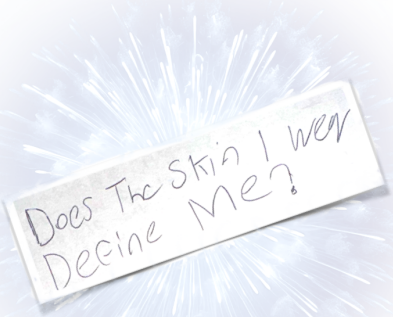
“Truly, there is no feeling like standing on the stage and knowing that everyone’s fucking with your music.”

As he’s grown, the tight-knit nature of Adelaide’s music scene has provided a range of pros and cons for Jesse’s pursuits.

“My fan base is really, really spread out, which has always felt weird being in Adelaide,” he says. “A lot of the time, I feel like an American artist who lives in Australia, because my most popular listening demographic comes from the United States.”

Beyond consumption, Jesse has also struggled in the performance scene, with his unique sound often isolating him from other bands.

“I definitely feel like a little bit of a black sheep in the Adelaide music sphere because of the type of music I make and my style of performing. Because simply put, it is auto-tune and electronic instrumentation, and on stage, it’s just me and a drummer.”



However, it's the love for the music that continues to drive him, and the growing reception he has received, both within Adelaide, and across the world. And now, as Jesse becomes a more prominent figure, he's grown to embrace Adelaide as a part of his artistic identity.

"For a long time, I felt a little bit trapped by being an Adelaide artist. But now I want to embrace it more. This city has really shown me what it means to be a passionate artist, and it's challenging. But it's what I need to face the bigger industry."

The musical journey of JesseMelancholy is only starting. With his new single, *Kiss The Sky,* having dropped on March 14, and upcoming projects already in the works, Jesse is continuously pushing himself to refine his sound and find new ways to connect with listeners.

"I love a lot of things in life, but I don't think I've been able to express myself in a way that feels true outside of music. I don't think I connect with any art form more than the world of music."

To create is one thing, but to build something truly expressive of yourself and identity is a skill unlike any other. JesseMelancholy is carving out a space that undeniably captures his identity. A space that isn't bound by genre, but founded in its connection to the human experience. And despite the many transformations he will experience in his artistry, one thing is certain: JesseMelancholy isn't just making music — he's making a statement.

It’s a powerful skill for a band to balance the serious, career approach with a loose, onstage energy. For Sycamore, the weight of expectation felt difficult to overcome at first, but along the way, they’ve found the perfect median between musical precision and performative chaos. Initially founded by brothers, Ryan and Chris — lead vocalist and guitarist — they later combined with drummer, Steve, and bassist, Henry, to form the band we hear today. And with each new gig, their name continues to grow within Adelaide’s rock scene.

After years of musical development and shifts to sound, Sycamore has now landed in a place that feels true to them.

“Our EP was definitely rocky with a few slower songs. But I think we’re definitely transitioning into more punchy rock now,” Ryan reflects.

But throughout all, the band’s always held close connection to their lives — even down to its name

“The band’s actually named after the street that my brother and I grew up on.” Ryan says, as he explains their initial formation — a project between Ryan, Chris and friend Jackson in 2018, before solidifying themselves as a four-piece in 2021, with the addition of Steve and Henry.

For each member, music has always been a defining feature of their lives. Chris and Ryan grew in a family surrounded by music, so its influence was only inevitable. And for Steve and Henry, music was always present from a young age.x

"I've played music since I can remember," Steve says. "I studied it at school, then studied jazz drums at uni."

For Henry, his experience with music was more experimental.

"I started on piano, then moved to double bass, then into jazz," he says. "After high school, I just kept playing whenever I could. I actually met Steve at a party, and one day he just sent me a message saying, 'Hey, I've got this band, I reckon you'd fit.' And that was that."

After releasing their self-titled EP in 2021 — a product of their various influences and unique styles — Sycamore is now finding their footing, releasing the single, *Timing,* in 2023, and preparing for more upcoming releases.

"Our songwriting process has evolved," Ryan says. "It's definitely a collaborative process between us all. Chris will have a riff, Steve might have a drum beat, Henry throws in an idea, and then I throw some lyrics on top."

And both lyrically and musically, the band leans into those late 1990's stylings, where a strong story drives each song they create.

"All of our songs have a deeper meaning, even though it might not seem like it," Ryan reveals. "So, being live and hearing someone sing back your lyrics always, always resonates with you."

Collectively, the band describes this as a Paul Kelly-esque approach.

"Ryan writes very songs that have a strong story. I know Paul Kelly's a massive influence for him, and it's very that Paul Kelly-esque approach.

And as an audience listening to that music, they too are given the chance to relive this story through the consuming energy that each member brings when on the stage. Their first show as a 4-piece — opening for British India at The Gov — truly set the tone for how they wanted their live performances to be.

“When we first started, we took it way too seriously,” Ryan admits. “We were always critiquing ourselves too much, whereas now we just know that we’ve gotta go there and have fun.”

The rapport between each band member and their connection to the audience is undeniable when they get on stage. Even for Steve — feeling restricted behind his drum kit — his performance is able to perfectly match that of his bandmates.

“I try to perform like I’m a lead singer,” he says. “I don’t just sit there. I want to put on a show. I stand up, move around—half the time I end up with whiplash from flailing around too much.”

And its that chemistry that makes their performance something that Adelaide keeps coming back for. But for the band, they too have faced struggles in the scene as they try to grow.

“It’s hard to get out of the Adelaide bubble,” Steve says. “You really have to work for it. But if you put on a proper show, people get around it.”

Henry compares it to Melbourne. “There, people go to venues regardless of who’s playing. In Adelaide, it’s more on the bands to get people in the door.”

But, despite the struggles, their love for the music is what drives them to continue, with Sycamore having no plans to slow down. Gearing up to release two new songs, planning bigger shows, and potentially bringing in another guitarist this year, their long-term goals are unending.

“Right now, we just want to take every opportunity we can and see where it leads.”

So, with new music, bigger shows, and a growing reputation in the performance scene, Sycamore continues to show that art is truly driven by passion.

IT WAS ONLY A KISS, HOW DID IT END UP LIKE THIS?

WILL EVEREST

For many, music is just an interest. But for Will Everest, it's an obsession. As a young artist, Will's journey in the Adelaide scene continues to be defined by his curiosity, dedication and insatiable need to create. And whether in his solo work, or with his rock band, *Violet Harlot,* Will's doesn't just want to write songs — he wants to create new worlds.

"It was never just something my parents were forcing me to do. I wanted to be in a band. I wanted to write songs. I wanted to be a rock star."

This undeniable passion for music has led Will to explore every corner of music, from playing guitar in high school, to now experimenting with instrumentation and production in his university studies. Now, with two released albums under *Violet Harlot,* and new conceptual projects in the works, Will Everest continues to prove that music is his purpose.

Despite playing guitar from a young age, it wasn't until high school that Will became truly aware of its power.

"I suddenly realised how cool music was. I would jam with my mates, write original songs, and go to gigs left, right, and centre."

During those years, his band *Violet Harlot* formed, giving him a new space to experiment with songwriting and performance. But, after graduating from high school in 2020, and being placed at the centre of the pandemic, Will found himself lost.

"I wasn't sure what to do. Uni? A job? Nothing excited me as much as music did. So I took a year off, went to every gig I could, and realised how many amazing bands Adelaide had that I had never even heard of."

That time of trailing local bands as they developed their style and built their name gave him a new perspective.

"They didn't have music on Spotify yet, but I loved them. And that inspired me. It made me realise: we need to get out of the rehearsal room and onto the stage."

While indie rock was felt like home to Will, he allowed himself to flow between different genres.

“Discovering my style was a long process,” he says. “Growing up, I thought rock stars were untouchable — that I could never be like them. But my teachers showed me that a lot of pop songs are just four chords. That changed everything.”

That realisation of simplicity within some of the world’s biggest songs made this world feel accessible.

“I was obsessed with Nirvana in Year 8, and when my guitar teacher showed me how simple ‘Smells Like Teen Spirit’ actually was, it blew my mind. Suddenly, I wasn’t just listening to music—I was making it.”

Will’s influences are vast, opening up to every new sound and finding a way to incorporate it into his style. But among all, the experimental rock of King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard and the multi-instrumental approach of Kevin Parker from Tame Impala remains at the forefront of his inspirations.

“I love that I was born in a time where music technology is so accessible,” he says. “One person can do it all. Back in the day, you needed session musicians. Now, you can record a whole album in your bedroom.”

It’s not just the sound that drives Will, but the songwriting too. For Will, lyricism offered him a new artistic challenge.

“The creative process is always so different and unexpected—that’s what makes it exciting. Sometimes I start with lyrics, sometimes I start with a melody. Sometimes I just want to create something that feels good. Other times, I’m dealing with big emotions, and music helps me process them.”

Will works within his personal notebook, writing lines every day which become filtered and refined to create the lyrics he then brings to the stage. And while often falling into fictionalised worlds, they still carry raw emotions that feel daunting when presented to an unknown audience.

“It can be scary. You put something personal out there and hope it resonates. But once you find a supportive community, you gain confidence. That’s why Adelaide’s scene is so important—it gives artists the space to take risks.”

The creativity within Adelaide is what initially sparked Will’s desires. And now, it continues to offer more opportunities for connection and inspiration.

“Everyone knows everyone,” Will says. “That’s the beauty of it—you meet talented people, and you don’t just want to be friends with them, you want to work with them.”

But there are struggles. For Will — as both an artist and consumer of the Adelaide scene — distance continues to restrict its growth.

“The reason so many bands skip Adelaide is geography. It’s a nine-hour drive to Melbourne, a nine-hour drive to Perth. Bands on the east coast can tour multiple cities in a few hours, but for us, it’s a huge commitment. But if we can build up more touring opportunities closer to home, maybe we can bridge that gap.”

Adding to the creative scene is his band *Violet Harlot*. From their high-vis stage uniform, to their illustrated album covers, this band has crafted their own world, both visually and sonically.

“King Gizz has this whole ‘Gizzverse’ where their albums connect. And that idea of storytelling through music, of building something bigger than just a collection of songs, really inspires me.”

The band’s first two albums, 'Violet Harlot in Viz’ (2023) and ‘Ultraviolet’ (2024), showcase their unique blend of garage rock, indie, and punk energy.

“We work as a collective,” Will says. “Sometimes one of us brings in a nearly finished song, other times we jam and build something together. There’s no strict formula—it’s just about finding what works.”

And their album covers, reminiscent of the *Gorillaz* aesthetics, was designed by a close friend.

“Most bands either use photos or abstract designs for their covers. But we wanted something different —something that turned us into characters that are part of a larger story.”

Will’s first gig with Violet Harlot was at Broadcast Bar in 2021, and even with COVID restrictions, its impact impact stayed with him.

“It was a tiny dive bar, set up by Molly Rocket. People couldn’t dance, but they were still so engaged, and the energy in the room was unreal. It made me realise how much I loved performing.”

That energy has only grown. One of his most memorable moments came during the release show for their single, ‘Demon Girl’.

“We hadn’t even planned to release that song first. But then we played it, and people were singing along to the chorus before it was even out. That blew my mind. Hearing a crowd roar back at you is a feeling I’ll never forget.”

But this energy wouldn't be felt by the audience if Will didn't bring any himself. For him, Amy Taylor of Amyl & The Sniffers has always been a major inspiration.

"She's a human firework," he says. "She just everything I try to do on stage. She's so unrelenting, so herself, and she's so clearly empowered by the energy of punk rock."

And *Violet Harlot* isn't planning on stopping anytime soon, with Will teasing at the ambitious project currently in the works.

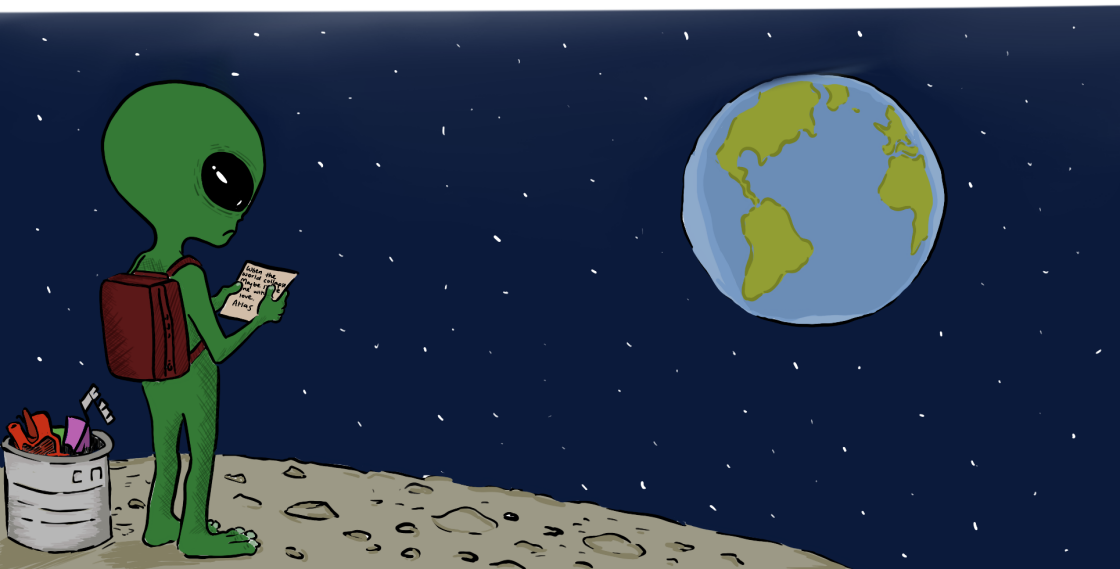
"I can't give away too many details, but we are working on some sort of big project that tells a story. Not just a single, but a collection of songs that tell a story together with a sci-fi theme about going to space."

The idea stemmed from a nine-minute instrumental track they had been jamming on, tentatively named 'Red Hyper Giant'.

"After a while, when I realised that we had a few other songs that were about space, I started thinking, surely we can piece them together to tell some sort of sci-fi story?"

While an ambitious step towards a new style for Violet Harlot, it wouldn't be Will if he wasn't pushing himself beyond the boundaries of what is already known.

"At the end of the day, I just want to create something meaningful," he says. "Something that makes people feel something—whether it's excitement, nostalgia, or just the need to scream along."



For any musician, it takes time to carve out an artistic identity. But, for those who start a passion without connections, especially within a smaller city like Adelaide, it can feel like an endless search to be heard. But if there's one thing that MÄNTRÄ continues to prove, it's that they're never going to stop searching.

With a new single ready to drop in just two days, the band is at a major turning point. Since forming in 2019 as a cover band, before transitioning to their own music in 2022, MÄNTRÄ has consistently refined their sound, with the future offering new hopes for their music.

MÄNTRÄ's line up has gone through changes over the years, but at the heart of every performance has been Luke (guitarist and lead vocalist), Kieran (bass and vocals), and Arnie (lead guitarist).

Despite coming together through their shared love for music, they didn't jump straight into their original work.

"We didn't really write a lot for the first two years. It was just smashing out covers, getting used to playing together."

But, after those years of performing and finding a space on the stage, they evolved their gigs into their own. Their early singles, 'Bullseye' and 'One for the Team' marked a major shift in MÄNTRÄ, transitioning them from a simple cover band to a group with something to say. And as the releases continued, now having dropped 'Queen of Misery' earlier this year, MÄNTRÄ has cemented themselves through their unique sound.

However, as a group finding themselves very much on the peripheries of the Adelaide scene, it has taken

time to find a true space for themselves. Their first gig of originals was in 2022, to a sparse crowd of roughly ten people. And as MÄNTRÄ has expanded their audience across Australia, they've also had time to reflect on their experiences in their hometown.

"It's more welcoming interstate," Luke explains. "We can play to people who don't know us, and still get a good reaction. In Mildura, we had circle pits going—and we're not even a metal band!"

"It's kind of awkward," Arnie and Kieran feel. "It's like an old-boys club. People go to shows because they know who's playing. So if you don't have connections, it's a bit of an uphill battle."

This hasn't stopped them from making headway. With each new release, and each new show, MÄNTRÄ continues to solidify their name as a powerful upcoming band. And with their single release this week, and a concept record set for the future, they're ready to take the next step.

The next era of MÄNTRÄ kicks off in two days. And what's to come there after remains a secret for now.

"It exists," Luke teases. "And it's coming very soon."

They've built the aesthetic. They've put in the hours of work. They've meticulously studied My Chemical Romance music videos. But, beyond the image we see, what makes MÄNTRÄ such a powerful band is their unrelenting persistence.

"We're just not gonna stop," Luke says. "Keep making music. Keep making weird music videos. And eventually, someone's gonna notice."

Get ready for this Friday, the 28th of March, because we cannot wait to see what MÄNTRÄ has lined up next.

(All photo credit: Josh McCawley)

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